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## Down the Shadowed Lane.

Down the shadowed lane she goes,  
And her arms are laden  
With the woodbine and wild rose,  
Happy little maiden!  
Sweetly, sweetly doth she sing  
As the lark above her;  
Surely every living thing  
Thou hast seen must love her.

As she strayed and as she sung,  
Happy little maiden,  
Shadowy lanes and dells among,  
With wild flowers laden,  
Chanced a bonny youth that way,  
For the lanes were shady;  
She dropped one wee flower, they say,  
Did this little lady.

Dropped a flower, so they say;  
Dropped, and never missed it;  
And the youth, alack a day,  
Picked it up and kissed it.  
Now in sweet lane wanderings,  
With love-flowers laden,  
With her love she strays and sings,  
Happy little maiden!

## THE GURNHAM MYSTERY.

Just within the little town of Gurnham there stood, some twenty years ago, a comfortable, old-fashioned dwelling, overshadowed by two huge elms, the property and residence of Ezra Gentry and his wife Harriet.

Two years before the opening of my story, he had astonished the good folks of Gurnham by bringing home to the old homestead a wife, young in comparison with himself, and remarkably good-looking.

Now, had Mrs. Gentry been as good-tempered as she was good-looking, there would have been nothing to complain of. She was industrious, neat, and attentive to her husband's comfort; but, alas! she had, as Ezra soon discovered to his cost, that one great defect of woman, a sharp and never-ending tongue. The least thing worried her; she had no patience with her husband's little failings, and in his especial failure to use the door-mat, and his habit of smoking—which was a second nature to him—afforded a constant source of irritation and fault-finding. So poor Ezra, finding little peace at home, absented himself as much as possible on the plea of "business," until at length he rarely visited home more than once a month, and then but for a day or two at a time.

This still further aggravated his wife's temper and tongue; so that now, instead of a welcome, he was generally received with bitter reproach, invective, and threats to leave him altogether, and return to the relatives with whom she had formerly lived. All this the husband bore at first with stoical patience; but there were times when even his quiet temper was aroused, and it was known to the neighbors that more than one scene of violence had taken place between the two.

Once, after an unusually long absence, Captain Gentry paid a visit home from Northbeach, the harbor town, fifteen miles distant, at which his schooner sometimes received her lading. On entering Gurnham, he met his friend James Halliday, to whom he mentioned that he should remain until Sunday, this being Tuesday. On the Thursday following, Halliday, having some little business affairs to discuss with Captain Gentry, about dark stepped over to the homestead for that purpose.

Harriet Gentry stood at the supper-table, washing knives and forks with great energy, while her tongue was evidently going at an equal rate. Her husband sat in an arm-chair beside the fire, smoking a pipe; not in his usual placid, dreamy manner, but with short irregular puffs. Both were evidently excited and angry, and as the visitor stood for a moment without the window, he caught the sound of the woman's voice, uttering, in broken phrases:

"Lazy, good-for-nothing lubber; wonder what I could have been thinking of when I married you, or why I married you at all!"

"You married me, may be, for money and a home," returned Ezra, apparently aroused by this out.

"And a pretty home it is, where everything depends upon me to be kept in order. 'Twould go to rack and ruin but for me, as you know very well. There's to-day's work of yours, for instance; the garden gate left open, and the pigs ruined a whole patch of cabbages. Dear knows the trouble I have whenever you come home!"

"And the Lord knows what trouble I have!" returned Ezra. "It is the first time in my recollection that the peace of this roof has been destroyed by a woman's ill tongue and ill temper. I wish to heaven that my good old mother were alive again!"

"There it is!—always throwing your dead mother into my teeth, as if I believed all you say about her. I've no doubt she was a stingy, stuck up, hypocritical!"

"Woman!" thundered Captain Gentry, rising, and laying down his pipe, "I've borne enough from you already. You may abuse me as much as you will;

but just say another word against my blessed mother, and I'll!"

"You'll what?" retorted Harriet, laying down her towel, and advancing toward him with inflamed face and arms akimbo. "D'ye think I'm afraid of you, you poor pretence of a man, that you dare to threaten me? What is it you'll do, I should like to know?"

"I'll teach you, once for all, who is master here. I'll put a stop to all this, once and forever! I'll rid myself of!"

Here the words were lost to the listener outside the window, as Ezra crossed to the furthest side of the room, and took down a clothes-line which hung looped over a wooden peg in the wall. Then he turned toward his wife, but in so doing appeared to catch sight of the uncurtained window, and came directly toward it.

Halliday, unwilling to be caught in the act of eavesdropping, hastily slipped aside; but he saw the solid wooden shutters drawn in, and heard again the voice of Harriet Gentry in a high key, then a half-stifled scream, and the sound of a struggle, and a chair knocked over. He retreated, thinking over the scene, and feeling rather glad that Gentry had at last taken so decided a position—"a thing," he said to his wife, in describing the scene, "which, if he'd been a man proper spirit, he'd have done long ago. But she'll be more quiet after this, take my word for it."

Very quiet, indeed, appeared the homestead on the following day, as Halliday and his wife glanced curiously across the road, watching in vain for the appearance of either Mrs. Gentry or her husband.

That evening, a neighbor of the name of Grimes stepped over to "have a chat" with the captain. Gentry himself answered his knock, and with a very sober and cast-down countenance, led the way to the kitchen.

In answer to Grimes's natural inquiry for his wife, he answered briefly that "Harriet had gone on a visit to her relations."

Grimes saw that something was wrong, and as the captain seemed depressed, shortened his visit. The following morning the house was discovered to be closed, the gate nailed up, and the premises entirely deserted.

Very soon, however, the matter assumed an aspect which was the furthest possible removed from the ludicrous, and aroused not only Gurnham, but the whole country, into a thrill of horror and indignation.

Late one summer morning, Michael Sweeney, having gone out to look for his pigs, and having searched in vain about their usual haunts, was returning home, and "for shortness," instead of pursuing the circuitous road, took a direct cut across the marshy waste known as Tyler's Track.

It was wet, slimy, and overgrown with rushes, bushes, and briars. As Michael trudged along, he had occasionally to look carefully to his footsteps to avoid a knee-deep plunge into the mire. His attention was arrested by something white just at his feet, and at the same moment, by a sudden gleam or flash beside it. He stopped, and bending, looked down curiously. What was his surprise to see that it was a brilliant jewel, evidently set in gold. In trembling fear and eagerness he ventured to put forth his hand and touch the mysterious treasure. He next essayed to take it up, when, to his horror, he lifted with it from the dark waters of the marsh a hand—a small and white woman's hand. And at the same instant he saw, by the rising moonbeams, the cold, dead face of a woman!

With a cry, the affrighted Michael dropped his new-found treasure, and in a few desperate leaps had cleared the treacherous marsh. Never pausing until he reached his own cottage, he there, in broken gasps, poured out to the ears of his wife, and a chance visitor, his marvelous story. Thence it soon got wind; and in an hour thereafter some dozen men were on their way to the haunted spot—some believing, some doubting, others ridiculing the story.

The cause of the believers was, however, triumphant, when, upon reaching the spot, under the guidance of Michael, his courage fortified by numerous glasses of his national beverage, they discovered, truly, the same dead, unnaturally white and sodden woman's face glaring ghastly up in the moonlight.

They drew her out of the dank weeds and dark waters. Halliday, who, living nearest the spot, had joined the group on their expedition, drew near, and with the others gazed upon the face.

"It is Harriet Gentry!" he said.

An inquest was next morning held upon the body, and the identity established by the testimony of more than fifty persons who had known Mrs. Gentry while living.

The body of the unfortunate woman was horribly bruised; yet death had evidently been produced by strangulation, a piece of rope about three yards in length being found tightly drawn around the neck. And this rope, when examined and compared, corresponded exactly with the clothes-line which James Halliday testified to having seen in the hands of Ezra Gentry, as he advanced threat-

eningly towards his wife on the night we have mentioned.

Doctor Martin, the chief physician of Gurnham, testified that on the night of Thursday, the 15th day of June (the day on which Halliday paid his visit to Gentry's house), he was returning at a late hour from visiting a patient in the country, when, on the road near Tyler's Track, he saw a woman walking rapidly, a carpet-bag in her hand, and that she stopped and inquired of him whether she could reach Land's tavern, two miles from town, in time for the stage-coach to Northbeach. He replied in the affirmative, and passed on, when, at a turn of the road a little further on, he came suddenly upon a man, in whom, the moon being clear, he recognized Captain Ezra Gentry. The latter was also walking fast, following the woman, and, as he passed, he looked down, as if unwilling to be recognized.

Doctor Martin could swear to the man's having been Ezra Gentry. About the woman he could not be certain, not seeing her face distinctly; yet her figure, step and voice, as described by him, corresponded with those of Gentry's wife.

On the strength of all this testimony, the opinion of the townspeople was quickly formed. Harriet Gentry had been murdered by her husband, Ezra Gentry; and upon this conclusion a warrant was issued, and two officers dispatched to Northbeach in time to arrest the suspected murderer, just as he was about getting his vessel under weigh.

Captain Gentry turned pale when the officer laid his hand upon his shoulder, and informed him that he was arrested on the charge of having murdered his wife.

"Harriet ain't dead?" he gasped, indistinctly.

"She is dead," said the officer. "She was found dead and buried, in the marsh on Tyler's Track, with a rope around her neck."

"Gracious heavens!" gasped Ezra, sinking nervelessly into a chair; it was about there I parted from her. Who could have done it? Poor Harriet!"—and a moisture rushed to his eye.

"You are suspected," said the officer; and proceeded to mention to him the suspicious circumstances of the case as regarded himself.

The captain listened in silence, a thick perspiration breaking out upon his forehead, which he mechanically wiped away with a cotton handkerchief.

When the man had concluded, he remarked quietly: "I see. It does look against me, no doubt; but as I live, I'm an innocent man, and know no more about this affair than you do. All that Halliday says he saw between me and Harriet is true; but I merely tied her with the clothesline to the bed-post, to show I was the strongest, and when she commenced again abusing me and my mother, I tied a handkerchief over her mouth. But I felt that I was acting like a brute to treat a woman in that way; so I soon unloosed her, when she directly commenced packing up her traps, in a towering rage—as, p'raps, poor woman, she'd cause to be—declaring she'd go back to her Uncle Neal's, and never see me again. Well, I hardly believed she was in earnest, knowing that, generally, her bark was worse than her bite; so I sat smoking, and let her start off with her carpet-bag; but when she had been gone about fifteen minutes, I started in her wake, and overhauled her in Tyler's Track, just after I passed the doctor on the road. I did feel ashamed to look the doctor in the face; for I fancied he'd met Harriet, and that she'd naturally explained how she came to be out alone at that time of night. When I came alongside of her I spoke as mildly as I could; said I was sorry I'd treated her so, and asked her to go back with me, when we'd both try to behave better. But she wouldn't answer me—wouldn't listen to me; and so I was forced to return alone. I felt so badly about it, and so ashamed of myself, that I left Gurnham the next day without seeing any one."

This was the explanation given the officer by Captain Gentry; and this was also, nearly word for word, his testimony in court, when brought up for trial.

It was two days previous to that appointed for the final hearing of the case, when a new horror arose in the town of Gurnham. The house of Ezra Gentry was haunted—haunted by the ghost of the murdered woman!

There could be no doubt of the fact. James Halliday, standing in the dusk at the door of his house, had seen a pale, uncertain shadow of a woman pass from the house to the well and back again. She had her throat wrapped around with a white band or cloth; and though he was too distant to see her face, yet the figure and walk were those of Harriet Gentry.

Such were the rumors afloat in Gurnham; and so respectable were the characters of the witnesses, that even the least superstitious were forced to admit that there must be "something" in it.

To explain the mystery, and set the matter at rest, it was proposed to go in a body to the house on the following night (the night before the trial), and fully investigate the whole premises; but only

two young men volunteered, and even these declared that they would not go unless reinforced by others. And so the plan was postponed.

The next day was the day of the trial. The court house was crowded, the judge, the jury, the counsel, and the prisoner all in their places. The prisoner looked pale, but quiet and resigned. A breathless interest pervaded the assembly during the proceedings, until at length the judge commenced delivering his address to the jury. Scarcely had he spoken a dozen words when he was interrupted by a commotion without.

There was a rush, a confusion of cries and exclamations; and the next moment there stalked into the court room, and up towards the judge's seat, the ghost of the Gentry house, the form of the murdered Harriet Gentry herself—the identical form, with the identical face which nearly the whole concourse had seen lying stark and cold in death, and then lowered into the grave, and covered over with earth.

The excitement may be imagined. All rose to their feet; many shrank back, and some fled. The ghost staggered forward to the box in which sat the prisoner, laid its thin hand gently on his shoulder, and turning its sunken eyes upon the judge, said, in a hollow voice, "He is innocent! It was not I who was murdered."

"Who are you?" inquired the judge, gravely; for even he had been startled by this unexpected apparition.

"I am Harriet Gentry—his wife! I left him, in a pet of ill-temper, to go to a friend at a distance. I returned three days ago, wet with the rain, tired and ill. I haven't been able to leave the house since; and all whom I spoke to as they passed the house, fled from me. I thought it was on account of my having left home as I did, until to-day a good woman came in and told me everything. I couldn't rest then. I got out of bed and dressed, and came here."

She spoke these words with difficulty, occasionally pressing her hand to her throat, as though it pained her, and was more than once interrupted by a fit of coughing, such as one may have who is suffering from a violent cold and sore throat.

To describe the excitement produced by this scene would defy description. It was soon made evident that the woman was no ghost, but in reality the living and breathing Harriet Gentry. Yet, in this case, who was the murdered woman? Had a ghost itself appeared in court, it could not have occasioned more astonishment and bewilderment than was presented in this simple question. The perfect resemblance of this corpse, in form and feature, to Harriet Gentry had been in itself sufficient to justify every person who knew her in swearing that it was hers; and the identity had been corroborated by the shawl in which the body had been found wrapped; and the rope about its neck, corresponding so exactly with the clothes-line in Gentry's house, and the knife on the floor, showing in what manner the rope had been cut. Yet here was Harriet alive; while a score of persons had seen the body of the murdered woman buried in the old churchyard, where the grave still was as arranged on the day of her burial, and presenting no appearance of having been since disturbed.

Captain Gentry was, of course, at once set at liberty, and accompanied his wife home, where he remained, amusing and attending her with assiduous care. Harriet was for some weeks very ill; and as she slowly mended, people were surprised to find how changed in disposition she appeared—how patient and quiet, and how unwontedly gentle towards her husband. But the truth was, that she had received a great shock in the circumstances above related; and, reflecting how nearly she had been the cause of the death of her husband, who, but for her timely appearance, must assuredly have been hanged for a crime he had not committed, her heart was softened towards him. She had, beneath all her irritability, a real regard for her husband; and, being in the main a well-meaning woman, it had needed only this to open her eyes to her own faults, and work a reformation in both temper and tongue. And, from this time forth, Captain Ezra found himself a much happier man than he had ever before been.

Just ten years after the events here related, Father Brian, a priest, in Wheeling, was summoned at midnight to visit a man who, the physician said, had not many hours to live. He called himself Gustave Weimar; and the following was the confession which, on his deathbed, he made to the good priest:

About twelve years previous, he said, he had met in London a young woman who went by the name of Matilda Roche, whom he had married. The union was not a happy one. Matilda was pretty and vain, and her husband jealous. Repeatedly he had remonstrated with her upon her light conduct and neglect of home duties, until at length she threatened to leave him entirely, and return to London. She was of a respectable family, she said, and being an orphan, had, together with a sister named

Harriet, been brought up by a certain "Uncle Neal," from whom she had run away at fourteen, and, to prevent pursuit or inquiry, had caused a report of her death to be circulated among her former friends. This had succeeded, and none of them suspected that she was still alive. Yet, since her marriage with Weimar, she had become exceedingly anxious to once more see her relatives, and especially her sister, whom she said was married, and living in Gurnham. Weimar refused to allow her to leave home; and she was equally determined to do so. Many bitter scenes took place between them, and at length the wife disappeared, taking with her a sum of thirty pounds from her husband's desk. This conduct so exasperated Weimar that he set out in pursuit of her, and went directly to Gurnham, whither he felt confident she had first proceeded. He easily traced her thither, and went at once to the house of Ezra Gentry, to which a stranger directed him. This was past nine o'clock in the evening. As Weimar knocked at the front door, it was opened by his wife. Upon seeing him, she looked more indignant than alarmed, and, at first, refused to allow him to enter; but he pushed his way past her. In the discussion that ensued, he learned that she had arrived but one hour before him, had found the house shut up and deserted, but the back door unlocked; and, concluding that the family would return that night or the following day, had entered, and, overcome with fatigue, had directly gone to bed, when she was aroused by her husband's knock. She reproached him for following her, bade him leave the house, where, she said, he had no right to be, and refused to give up the money. He thereupon commenced searching her person, which she resisted, and a scene of struggling and violence succeeded, in which the woman had nearly gotten the mastery, when Weimar, catching sight of the clothes-line hanging near, seized upon it.

"At first," he said, "I thought merely to frighten her by threatening to strangle her with it; but no sooner had I got the rope round her neck than a demon seemed to possess me. I could no more have let loose my strain upon that rope than a starving man could have refrained from swallowing the meat set before him. I killed her; taking a kind of fiendish joy in witnessing her death-agonies, and yet all the time knowing that I loved her, and would for a lifetime rue the deed. And so it was; for, from that day to this, I have never known peace of mind or of conscience."

The deed committed, the next care was to conceal the body. His wife had brought with her merely a valise; and this and its contents he carefully burned in the fireplace of the bedroom. There was no time, he thought, to dig a grave; and he was not sufficiently acquainted with the premises and the neighborhood to choose a safe place of concealment for the body. Yet he had observed, on his way to Gurnham, a lonely and marshy waste about half a mile from the house, where, it occurred to him, he might conceal the body, for at least such time as would allow of his getting far away from that part of the country. And as neither his wife nor himself were known there—nor, indeed, having both arrived after dark, had been seen sufficiently to be recognized again—there was apparently no danger of the body, if found, being identified, or of suspicion being directly to himself.

The concealment of the body of the murdered woman effected, the murderer had lost no time in making his escape from the place—stealthily crossing the country by night, and striking for the nearest railroad. At his own home, no danger menaced him. His acquaintances all knowing the circumstances of his wife's departure, it was easy to satisfy their inquiries by saying that he had not been able to discover her.

And thus he had lived for ten years, unsuspected, and regarded as a good man and neighbor—he whose hands were dyed with the blood of his own wife.

At the request of the dying man, the good priest forwarded this statement to Mrs. Gentry. And thus was at length explained the mystery of the strange affair which had so long puzzled and bewildered the good people of Gurnham.

## A King in Brooklyn.

John King, when called before Justice Delmar, to answer the complaint preferred against him, said to the officer:

"Now tell the truth, and that is all I want you to do."

"You were drunk, and you know you were, and you know, and so do all the neighbors know, that you are a subject to the—"

"Stop," said King, interrupting the officer, "you see that you confuse yourself, and the judge there can see that you do, for how, let me ask you, can a king be a subject, eh?"

"Give the officer five days to answer that, John," said the justice, "and in the meantime you go to Raymond street jail."